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presents which the applicant brought his patron-to-be. A short trial period established the readiness of the 'client' to fulfil his obligations, and the ceremonial gift of a sword and turban by the patron to his new henchman sealed the pact. Such a pact involved on the part of the client gifts, services, and a regular tithe paid from the produce of his farm; on the part of the protector, help against claims, just or unjust, of other people, against the abuse of power by other feudal lords, sometimes grants of land, and invariably assistance in all matters that had to do with the central authority. In legal affairs, e.g. court cases brought before the central authority in Bida, the protector, residing in the capital, with his knowledge of state affairs and his private influence, would give invaluable help to the powerless ignorant peasant. Even to-day, peasants from the country, when summoned before the court in Bida, invariably go first to see their protector in town, ask for his help or advice, and then appear in court accompanied by one of his men—an outward sign of their close connexion with the powers that be. This system of patronage is involved in the very structure of this rigid class society; it grows to an institution which impresses its stamp on the whole social life of Nupe and indeed all the Emirates of Northern Nigeria. We may call it by the native name, *bara*-ship, from the Hausa and Nupe word *bara*, servant or serf, or by the name by which the same institution was known in Imperial Rome and in the feudal system of medieval Europe: the *patrocinium*, or clientage.[1]

Clientage, this sacrifice of freedom for the sake of political protection, is common to country and capital. But in the capital it has a variety of meanings. First, there are the men who, anxious to obtain political protection, attach themselves loosely to an important personage as his loyal followers without surrendering their independence. These men, who do not work for their patron nor bring him gifts or tributes, are called *egi kata*, 'sons of the house'—the Nupe word for adopted children. Then there are men who become *bara*—real *bara*—because they are poor, and sometimes also because they shirk hard work on the land. Impecunious craftsmen thus hope to obtain a prosperous customer; Mallams a wealthy patron who can use their services; and ex-peasants become servants in the house of their master, are given food and clothes, money for tax, and have their children educated by their patron. Here 'protection' comes to mean freedom from all more serious responsibilities. And lastly, over and above securing material assistance, attachment to a man of rank and influence is a way to secure social promotion, the chance of becoming 'somebody', of being lifted from the ignominy of a commoner's life into the sphere of rank and importance.[2] The man in town who has no land to offer, offers himself and his services. The *bara* attaches himself to the household of his patron; he is servant, messenger, major-domo, soldier in his master's private army. He may rise to the position of a trusted friend and intermarry into his

[1] See P. Vinogradoff, op. cit. i, p. 563, and v, pp. 460–2.

[2] One of my Bida informants, himself a man with numerous *bara*, divided the *bara* into three categories: those who 'are afraid' and seek protection; those who shirk hard work and responsibility; and those who are out for 'greatness'.

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426 735 a judge—the people may have recourse to pawning one family member to procure money for another. Younger sons would be pawned to find the bride-price for the eldest son, whose marriage must be made possible. Or a father would pawn himself to provide money for his son, perhaps to save him from prison or a death sentence. Girls, too, are pawned, though as a rule for a smaller amount of money than boys or men. I have recorded an interesting case of 'multiple' pawning: a man of about 30 had pawned himself in order to be able to marry, but could not find the money to ransom himself. He continued to live in bondage till his son from this marriage was twelve years old, and thus fit to be pawned in turn. The boy took the place of his father as pawn in the same house, and the older man was released. I do not know when, or if, the boy was in turn released.

426 735 567 558 It is interesting to compare pawning with slavery. The first difference is that pawning is, at least in theory, regarded as a purely temporary arrangement. The father or elder brother of a pawn would always expect to release their relative from bondage in from five to ten years. The pawn works for his master, in his house or on his land, like all other household members, slaves, or junior family members. But unlike slaves, pawns are servants in the narrow sense of the word: they cannot expect friendly help from their master; they would not, for example, be married at the expense of their master—if they cannot afford the bride-price they must remain unmarried. On the other hand, the master may not beat or kill the pawn, as he may a slave: this would constitute a normal case of assault or homicide, actionable before the court. A pawn who is unwilling or unable to work satisfactorily, can, however, be exchanged for another more promising member of his family. Pawns and their whole family are held in general contempt. There is no shame in having become a slave—this is 'luck of war'; but pawns and their families are tainted with a disgrace not easily forgotten. In pawning poverty, itself a shameful state in the eyes of the Nupe, reaches its lowest ebb. Even house slaves look down upon pawns, and order them about as their inferiors.

426 735 567 554 Another difference between pawning and slavery is the amount of money involved. While the prices for slaves are firmly fixed, the loan for which the pawn is taken as security varies greatly, between £3 and £10. The work of the pawn during the time of bondage represents the 'interest' on the loan. The profit motive is expressed most clearly in the practice that girl pawns were accepted only for smaller amounts. For with girls one had to reckon with a shorter period of 'amortization' as they might get married early and be redeemed by the bride-price. However, the profit motive is not sufficient to explain the institution of pawning.

● [517] A wealthy man could not, according to the Nupe code of morality, refuse a loan of this kind to a man who was badly in need of the money. Which means that the creditor might have to agree even to less tempting and profitable offers. Frequently he had to accept a young boy who, hardly yet an efficient labourer, would live in his house and learn farm-work or a craft only to be taken away again just as he had become a useful member of the household. For £5 one could buy outright a grown-up, well-

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be secret, should be considered more fortunate than the ordinary run of people. Yet why this should be so, why some families should have this special standing *in rebus sacris* and others not, is not a question in which the people show any interest. 'There is no fixed number of medicines,' they say, and hence no rule governing or accounting for their distribution.

We need not speak again of the community medicine *zumácikā*, which represents an isolated instance.[1] But we may note certain transitional forms, in which ownership by lineages shades over into ownership by the community. For certain of the hereditary medicines are vested in 'houses' which equally hold hereditary ranks and offices, so that the two possessions go together. When the family head succeeds to the rank, he also assumes charge of the *cigbe*; and the people in fact say of this kind of medicine that it is 'owned' by such-and-such a rank (not person). Now as the rank represents a privileged position ultimately derived from the community and entails duties on its behalf, so the possession of the medicine assumes the aspect of a privilege and duty delegated, by the community, to the particular lineage and its head: these are not so much 'owners' as trustees or guardians, much as the hereditary village priests are appointed guardians of a community *kuti*. Usually the analogy remains on this abstract level; but in one instance it becomes more tangible, when the properties of the hereditary *cigbe* include efficacy as an ordeal: here, then, the possession of *cigbe* ceases to be private, and its application turns fully into a right or duty executed for the well-being of the community.

5. CIGBE AND MORALITY

Excepting the isolated community medicine, no class of *cigbe* is unequivocally good, or for that matter unequivocally evil. But particular medicines may be morally reprehensible, so that all the various groups of *cigbe* experts must in varying degree face the responsibility of practising a craft not above blame or suspicion.

The contraceptive remedies of the barber-doctors and *cigbeciši* represent the mildest case; for though their immorality is a matter of common agreement, almost everybody ignores it in practice, and the *cigbe* practitioners could easily claim the neutrality of experts catering for a public demand. This is indeed the attitude of the barber-doctors. The *cigbeciši*, whose craft is bound up with mystic rules and sacred knowledge, are also more fully aware of the moral conflict; their attempts to justify the dubious practices

[1] There may of course be others, in parts of Nupe which I did not visit. But it is certain that their number is very small.

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thus reveals the underlying conviction that their skill should be morally blameless.

Yet it is precisely the adepts of the more mystical or sacred craft who must face this moral conflict in much graver form. For *cigbe-ciži*, individual practitioners, and the 'owners' of hereditary medicines alike also have knowledge of medicines not only morally dubious but straightforward evil and in fact called *cigbe benágũ*, 'evil medicines'. Now this means, for the Nupe, several things. It means that the use of the medicine 'harms innocent people', as does the farming *cigbe* which increases your crops at the expense of your neighbours, or that the medicine 'kills people', as do those vindictively 'protective' medicines which punish thieves, evil-wishers, or personal enemies. Again, a medicine is evil if it is apt to be abused by evil-minded persons, which is true of the invisibility *cigbe* and perhaps also of the 'protective' variety, though my informants could not say precisely what kind of abuse there might be. Finally, the efficacy of the medicine might be mistaken for witchcraft, and is for this reason adjudged 'evil'.

The last reason seems to be the crucial one. To begin with, it applies in every case and also reinforces all the other reasons. Thus the person made unexpectedly prosperous with the help of the farming *cigbe* might easily be taken for a witch by his neighbours; much the same might happen in the case of the vicious 'protective' *cigbe*; while the medicine which makes you invisible or enables you to feign death endows you with precisely the gifts with which witches are credited. Furthermore, where some of the other reasons appear inconclusive, the resemblance to witchcraft is decisive. It is clearly inconsistent to condemn the 'protective medicine', meant to attack only evil-doers or evil-wishers, while accepting without qualms the efficacy of deadly ordeals, which do precisely the same. Admittedly, there is a difference; while in ordeals and the like it is the law of the country that takes its course, the *cigbe* places the power of life and death within the reach of individuals, and this power works, though not at random, yet blindly, not measuring punishment against offence. In a society like Nupe, where the self-help of blood revenge is unknown, this is logically adjudged immoral and evil. Yet in argument the Nupe do not reason this way; rather do they fall back on the stand-by explanation, that this 'punishment' and 'killing' may be confused with witchcraft.

Undoubtedly, the medicines which bring harm or death upon people (innocent or otherwise) are as such condemned. 'There is nothing nice about these medicines,' said the Master of the *cigbe-ciži*, with some understatement. Yet they are evil also because they meddle in something that has the appearance of evil. And when the Nupe are reluctant to talk about these medicines, the

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reason is, again, their resemblance to witchcraft, with which subject no one wishes to seem conversant. I know of no case where accusations of witchcraft were later withdrawn and admitted to have been caused by some such mistake; and there can of course be no other proof to show that these mistakes are in fact apt to happen. But linguistic usage proves how tenuous is this distinction between witchcraft and things that look like witchcraft. I mentioned before the generic name for the medicines alleged to make invisible—*badúfu*, 'dark place'; now the same word is also used for the medicines which, in popular opinion, are employed by witches, and hence by the adepts in an art itself called 'black' or 'dark'. Again, the 'male' farming *cigbe* called *eshe* shares its name with the male variety of witchcraft. The experts among my informants insisted that the linguistic connection was entirely fortuitous; and it is true that the two names are identical only in Beni country while in the riverain area, for example, one denotes male witchcraft differently. But the ordinary man in Beni country is convinced that the efficacy of this *cigbe* and witchcraft are one and the same thing. Whether these medicines have merely been unhappily named, so that their names came to suggest the identity with witchcraft, I cannot decide: as they are now used they clearly stand for such a judgment (or confusion) of identity.

Let me anticipate one further point concerning witchcraft beliefs. Since so many *cigbe* look like witchcraft it is pertinent to ask if some do not also serve (or are believed to serve) witchcraft. In Nupe popular opinion witches do use particular *cigbe* to make themselves invisible and, generally, to equip themselves for their nefarious activities. And if persons do not become witches merely through having the required medicine, the latter yet helps, or may even be indispensable since the witch can by no other means defeat the other, protective, medicines which their victims might possess.[1] Witchcraft and anti-witchcraft, in that view, is a battle of *cigbe*. Among the experts, opinions varied. All were agreed on the existence and efficacy of the protective *cigbe*; but while some thought that 'real witchcraft needs no *cigbe*', others considered it at least likely that witches possessed a particular medicine which lent them their sinister powers. None of the experts admitted to possessing or preparing this utterly evil kind of *cigbe*, but a few suggested that certain of their colleagues—always living in other parts of the country—did so and were lying when they disclaimed such knowledge. And here the question must rest.

The fact remains that the medicine experts, though they may deny the knowledge of this most evil *cigbe*, yet admit knowledge

[1] This view is documented in the statement on witchcraft quoted on p. 165.

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of medicines almost as unequivocally evil. The same men, let us note, will also administer helpful, beneficial, 'good' medicine. On the whole, the latter are more numerous, and are considered more important when it comes to discussions or arguments. As for the others, the experts would claim that they take due precautions, giving the medicine away only to 'good people' and 'for the sake of God', not for ordinary gain. But these personal qualms do not explain away the confusion of moral standards and do not answer the question why practices contemptible by common agreement should yet be accepted and actively pursued. The answer seems to lie in the amoral character of the Nupe universe. There it is, composed of good things and bad, the handiwork of a deity which unconcernedly sets good beside evil. Man, it would seem, has no call to improve upon creation. The qualms of the *cigbeciži* are a concession to social conscience not to religious scruples; in the last resort they are concerned only with appearances—that their craft should not look like witchcraft. As regards the evil potentialities of 'medicine', they are accepted with the same optimistic cynicism with which the Nupe view the very world in which they live.

6. MODERN INFLUENCES

Islam has on the whole brought little change. It bans the hereditary medicines, since they approximate to the pagan worship of *kuci* and *kuti*, and may well have caused some of them to disappear. But the craft of the barber-doctors enjoys the respectability of a truly Mohammedan profession; while the medicines of individuals and the craft of the *cigbeciži* flourish among Mohammedans no less than among the pagans. Indeed many of these experts would regard themselves as good Moslems. Even the Master of the *cigbeciži* dresses like a Moslem, goes to the mosque, observes the fast and other rules of Islam, and boasts of his descent from men who served the Mohammedan Emirs of Nupe.

Nor do specifically Moslem practices compete seriously with the traditional craft. A great many mallams administer cures and sell charms or amulets, both prepared in strict accordance with the Moslem creed as they understand it. The cures all take the same form: the attributes of Allah or certain verses of the Qoran are written in ink on a wooden slate which is then washed clean, the inky water being drunk by the patient. The amulets, called *laya* (a Hausa word), consist of pieces of paper similarly covered with sacred writing, which are sewn into small leather cases and worn on the body. But Nupe religious conscience is accommodating: pagans wear the Mohammedan charms as often as Mohammedans

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world', and has no narrower, pragmatic or ethical application. As for the realm of ethics, Nupe doctrine is altogether silent. It upholds no ideal man, nor condemns his antithesis. There is no eschatology, no mythology exemplifying rights and wrongs, crime and retribution, and no promise of reward to the law-abiding. Nor is the formulated doctrine concerned with norms of action of more common currency, the simple rights and wrongs of everyday morality. 'Economic ethics' has its place in ritual; since this turns upon such things as birth, marriage and adolescence, crops and the exigencies of the seasons, prosperity and wealth, that is, upon events and conditions involving practical decisions, the respective courses of action are implicitly upheld as desirable, worthwhile and 'right'. But they are not 'announced' or 'revealed', neither commanded nor yet conspicuously dramatized. Their significance is left to preliminary knowledge, the worshippers knowing at the outset what to expect of the ritual, both as regards its aim and the promises it vouchsafes. And these are again silent on ethical issues. The fortunes anticipated and the misfortunes that may befall you imply neither merit nor punishment: they simply happen, while religion means no more than an aid in attaining or evading them.

Only two explicit ethical commands occur in the whole range of Nupe rituals. They refer to filial obedience (enjoined in the *gunnu*) and to the blessedness of fecundity. But we remember that the relevant episode of the *gunnu* is also the first to fall victim to change, and that other religiously sanctioned aids, the services of the *cigbeci*, are dispensed in disregard of the moral condemnation of childlessness. On balance, then, Nupe religion is amoral. As we anticipated, the crucial issue in most religions, how to reconcile the discrepancy of religious merit and practical rewards, simply does not arise. Nupe religion takes life as it is, offering no 'annunciations and promises' that would redress its iniquities, and hardly even endorsing the equity that should govern it.

This equity is largely left to the care of secular agencies alone. Religion plays a part only indirectly, through sanctioning the persons—kings, chiefs, executioners—who act as guardians of the accepted good. The sanction lies essentially in ritual, that is, in the various ceremonials involved in the assumption of these offices or entrusted to their holders. But let us note that these men guard, not really morality, but only that part of it which has solidified in the form of politically enforced law. Differently expressed, Nupe society knows mainly crimes and few 'sins', and only lawful, not saintly behaviour. On occasion religion abandons even this indirect support for the conventions of morality; for certain rituals deny these conventions, as in the sexual licence of the *gunnu* and *gani* or in the condonation of violence in the *navũ*. At this point, then, the

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the Nupe, neglecting rational connexions, seem to neglect the emotional aspect as well. The explanation is that the facts and events which bear on emotional reactions may be interpreted as rational motivations of the acts related in the story. This is in fact how the Yoruba approach, and utilize, the emotional aspects of the narrative.

Yet the comparative weakness of the emotional factor in the Nupe reproduction is not due to the Nupe lack of appreciation for rational connexions. The emphasis on emotional factors as far as it is evident in the Nupe version is not correlated with factors of reasoning; the appreciation of such elements as the beauty of the girl, her sadness after the murder, or the strength of the brothers' love, is not turned at once (as is the tendency among the Yoruba) into an interpretation of motives and reasons, but seems to represent a specific, self-sufficient trait. To a certain extent the emotional response among the Nupe appears linked with the tendency to dissolve the narrative into a series of concrete situations. (N 25) is a good example: he mentions that the brothers 'returned home' after they met the girl; he reproduces the girl's avowal of her love for the younger brother in the wrong place, but again in a typical 'situational' context: "when the girl learned of the murder, she said that she had only loved the younger brother"; he lets the people speak as follows: "This is what he did, God will revenge it." But he repeats twice how strongly the brothers loved the girl, and although he does not connect the girl's sadness with her disappearance, he does not omit, as many other Nupe did, the girl's 'aching heart'. But the cases in which I could find a similar correlation are few, and it seems possible that the emotional bias among the Nupe constitutes an independent, secondary psychological characteristic which may only run parallel to what we discovered to be the dominant trait in Nupe reproduction: stress on situational and temporal connexions.

The response to the moral ideas which are referred to in the narrative is again bound up with rational factors. The reinterpretation and rationalization of the statement "God will revenge it" which we discussed above is a point in question. But the attitude to the moral statements adds a new characteristic to the psychological differentiation of the two groups. All the Nupe reproductions keep closely to the meaning of the sentence "he has done an evil deed", The Yoruba reproductions on the other hand are much more varied and depart much more freely from the original. Here are a few Yoruba versions:

First recall:

(Y 6) The people said: "he abused his power over the younger brother."

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(Y 12) It surprised the people (to hear) what the elder brother had done. They said, "one should leave him alone, God will punish him."

(Y 18) When the people learned of the deed, it pained them very much. They said: "God will revenge it."

Second recall:

(Y 1) The people judged the elder guilty and evil; but God would punish him.

(Y 2) and (Y 5) The people were very sorry for the boy, but (they said): "Our Lord God will punish him."

(Y 12) The people said: "The elder should have left the younger alone. God will punish him."

To the Nupe then, the unspecific and abstract reference to the wickedness of the deed seems natural and satisfactory. The vague, schematic connexion which the story establishes between the wrong deed and the supernatural punishment, seems to satisfy their attitude towards moral value. The Yoruba, on the other hand, feel the urge to define the nature of the evil deed more closely and more explicitly. They weigh specific deed against specific punishment. Their attitude to the moral judgment is the same as to all the other features of the story: rational, and intent on clear logical connexions.

(5) *Arrangement and order*

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It is interesting to study the question of the order in which the events of the story are related and remembered. In the first recall the Nupe frequently (in 11 cases) rearrange this order, but only 2 Yoruba do the same. The explanation, however, cannot be that the precise, logically coherent narrative keeps more closely to the original story, for in the second recall the figures for the rearrangement of order are equal in both groups: i.e. the Nupe figures rise by 5, to 16, and the Yoruba figures by 14, from 2 to 16. Evidently, Yoruba recall, relying more on logical connexion, is apt to abandon the external form, whereas the loose, devious way of Nupe retelling which in the second recall is not much more free than in the first, may be more tied to the external order of events as to the only framework establishing coherence.

Before I pass to the picture experiments I will quote two full stories, one from the Nupe and one from the Yoruba, to illustrate the fundamentally different attitudes with which the two groups approach their task:[1]

(N 11) Long ago, there lived a young man. He had a brother. They were elder and younger brother. They lived, they lived, till they saw a young girl. The girl was very beautiful, they loved her with one heart, both the elder and younger brother loved her.

[1] Other full quotations of the story will be found in *Africa* (5).